

Attachment 6.3 – Quality, scope and extent of supported employment services

Washington DVR updated all Supported Employment policies and procedures in June 2007 to assure that the quality, scope and extent of supported employment services are delivered consistently to eligible individuals with most significant disabilities. There was extensive involvement in this effort by the State Rehabilitation Council, Client Assistance Program, and key partners representing Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health service providers.

An extensive training effort was implemented to assure all Washington DVR staff are knowledgeable and experienced in the delivery of supported employment services. This training was also provided to supported employment providers as well as state and county Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health service providers. Key features of the training included:

- Supported employment philosophy and values that reinforce the ability of individuals with the most most significant disabilities to work competitively.
- Effective methods and strategies for assessing the supported employment needs of individuals with the most most significant disabilities.
- Steps for successfully incorporating supported employment services in to an Individualized Plan for Employment.
- Strategies for identifying sources of extended services and natural supports.
- Methods of effectively collaborating with other service providers, advocates, and family members to maximize the quality and success of supported employment services.

Washington DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with developmental disabilities and individuals with mental illness. While supported employment service delivery to individuals with developmental disabilities is well established, significant systemic challenges are to be overcome in order to improve the delivery of supported employment services to individuals with mental illness.

Significant reductions in Washington State's community mental health service delivery capacity have resulted in an erosion of the availability of extended services by mental health providers. Approximately fifty percent of the individuals with mental illness served by Washington DVR are not eligible for community mental health services. Of those who are eligible, the majority are served by Mental Health Agencies who do not have the capacity to provide extended services.

This challenge is being addressed through the following strategies:

- Washington DVR is playing a leadership role within the Washington State Mental Health Transformation Grant to assure that long term objectives are implemented that increase the availability of extended services and other employment services through community mental health service providers.
- Washington DVR is collaborating with the DSHS Mental Health Division to

implement a statewide strategic initiative that will increase the availability of employment services and employment outcomes that MHD expects of its service providers.

- Washington DVR is collaborating with the DSHS/MHD and the Washington Community Mental Health Council to deliver a series of cross-system training sessions that jointly train DVR and mental health staff on improved collaboration and service delivery to individuals with mental illness.
- Washington DVR will explore additional options for extended services to be provided through peer support that an individual can develop to sustain their employment, such as Clubhouses and Wellness Recovery Action Plans.

While the above initiatives are ongoing to assure maximum service delivery capacity, the Washington state budget for July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2011 will significantly reduce funding for employment services within the DD and MH systems. This will reduce the availability of Supported Employment extended services funded through these programs. At the time of this writing it is unknown how significant this reduction will be; yet it is known that it will impact Washington DVR's supported employment delivery to DD and MH populations. Steps will be taken to fully explore other sources of extended services for DD and MH clients who will not be able to receive this support through DD and MH service delivery systems.

Washington DVR recognizes there are other individuals with most significant disabilities who require supported employment services besides those with developmental disabilities or mental illness, such as individuals with traumatic brain injury or other severe cognitive impairments. Longstanding systemic challenges within Washington State's delivery of human service has prevented supported employment services from being provided extensively to these other populations because of inadequate resources for extended services or natural supports. These systemic challenges will be exacerbated by the 2009-2011 Washington state budget due to significant reductions in all program areas that might otherwise offer Supported Employment extended services to these other populations.

Washington DVR will continue seeking to expand opportunities to serve a broader Supported Employment population by initiating closer collaboration within the Department of Social and Health Services and with local adult service providers to explore options for various agencies to become Employment Networks so they may utilize resources from Ticket-To-Work to provide extended services. This will be aimed at individuals who require supported employment but who traditionally have not had any source of extended services or natural supports.

In all cases where Washington DVR provides supported employment services, the transition to extended services occurs within 18-months of the individual's job placement (unless a longer period is necessary) at the point stable performance has been achieved on the job.